# The Congregationalist

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*"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1*

# BEREA BIBLE INSTITUTE AND CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES

**Visited by the Ralph F. Baldwins of Grand Rapids**

## OUR ARRIVAL AND WHAT WE FOUND

Dr. Howell D. Davies prepared the way. Joseph Chiang took us to the chapel, where we met workers of the Berea Bible Institute and Christian Assembly. Soon we had "tiffin" together, shark's fin soup and favorite foods, eaten with chopsticks. We found Christian hospitality, and along with it, learned of two important factors which lay behind the work.

**China persecutes Christians . . . Thousands escape through the bamboo curtain . . . Many arrive in Hong Kong.** But just as God has often provided a man when one is especially needed, so again He provided **Rev. Edward Huntington Smith, Inspiration for Hong Kong Missions.**

Rev. Edward H. Smith, American Board missionary in China for fifty years, took in orphan Livingston Chiang, who later founded Berea Bible Institute. After Chiang's death, Benjamin Chen, a brother-in-law and another of Mr. Smith's "boys," succeeded to the leadership. This retired missionary, now 88 years old, Honorary Chief Director of Berea Bible Institute, is grateful that the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches is helping the Hong Kong work.

### What the Mission Faces

Refugees, escaping to Hong Kong, must hide for months. Places to live are scarce, miserable, overcrowded. To these needy refugees, Berea's Assemblies offer fellowship, find living quarters and jobs if possible, and minister to their spiritual needs.

*8-foot square cubicle that 5 or 6 people are expected to occupy.*

Institute classes are at night as the five teachers of English and religious subjects, and the twenty students, work daily. The colony has no compulsory education and too few schools. Over half of the three million people are refugees. Some have found satisfactory places in the economy, many have not. The housing situation is appalling. The government has erected over a hundred large seven-story blocks, each housing between two and three thousand persons. The rooms are mostly eight feet square, with five or six occupants. There are community kitchens and toilets, but no elevators. These are all for refugees with low incomes. The cubicles rent for about $2.50 U.S. per month.

A director of Berea Bible Institute, a dedicated Christian, owns a ramshackle housing, built on a steep hillside. Among the dormitory-like dwellings where two hundred members of the Assembly (Church) live, is a chapel. Lin Ching Kwang, the minister, and his family live on the premises. Most of those who live here are unable to pay rent. The owner and the Assemblies share the expenses.

### The Institute and Its Buildings

Berea's original headquarters burned in 1954. The present Institute and Chapel is old, simple, and plain. An unbelievably large number of people live in the cramped quarters, including the president's family and several members of the staff and their families, together with homeless refugees whom they have taken in.

There are branch chapels and schools on the roofs of two of the seven story refugee blocks on the mainland. A fourth chapel and primary school are on Hong Kong Island. We met Chang Ki Lap, the minister, at his roof chapel. He is president of the primary school with almost three hundred pupils, who also attend Sunday School. He is a Berea graduate. A charge of approximately $1.00 U.S. per month is made for those whose parents can pay. No collections are taken at church services, so that no one is embarrassed. Boxes are available for offerings.

### The Classes and Services

We observed a student at the Institute conducting a Sunday School class of about seventy pupils. The leader explained about the straight and narrow way leading to Paradise — you know the rest. We understood, because it was pictured to the class. In the Church service an Institute teacher led the inspiring singing. Eighty members read the 92nd Psalm in unison. More would have attended but Hong Kong has a seven day work week, so many can only attend an evening service. Rev. Mr. Chen preached the sermon in Mandarin; a student translated, sentence by sentence into Cantonese. Both were emphatic and dramatic in voice and gesture. Prayer meetings are held Thursday evenings, women's groups, Friday evenings, and Youth Fellowships Saturday evenings.

The Assemblies do all they can toward financing the schools and Church work, but they still need financial help. The Bible Institute, which trains ministers, is entirely dependent on contributions. It is gratifying to know that every cent contributed to the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches goes to its worthy causes with no loss for overhead. The workers in Hong Kong are worthy and will use any help to advance their work done in the name of the Master.

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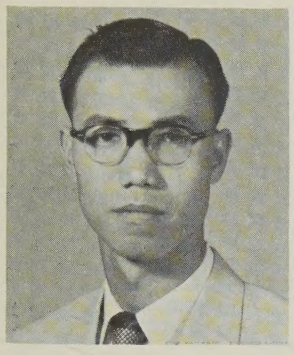
## BEREA BIBLE INSTITUTE

*Continued from Page 2*

### The Leaders

Benjamin Chen, President of Berea and Director of the Assembly, became a Christian in Mr. Smith's school in Foo Chow. Chen is 35 years old, has a charming wife and three lovely children. Joseph Chiang, son of the founder, is director of the Youth Fellowship. He also became a Christian in Mr. Smith's school. Joseph was a graduate engineer when he came to America.



*Benjamin Chen*

Dr. James E. Walter, President of Piedmont College, took special interest in this student. Together they attended the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches in Detroit in 1958. They also took in a meeting at the South Congregational Church of Hartford. After graduation from Piedmont, Joseph returned to Hong Kong. He and Tsi Wong and Joseph Miu, all speaking English, were most helpful to us. (Many Chinese Christians take on Bible names, as did Benjamin Chen, Sarah Chen, Joseph Chiang, Job Chen and Joseph Miu.)

Job Chen, Berea's Secretary, cooperated fully. In South China the Red police had caught him in the act of prayer. On a false charge they imprisoned him. At long last a trial gave the verdict of "innocent," but the police, more powerful than the court, kept him in prison. Only after 30 months was he released. In 1958 Job stole away by night in a boat, and landed undiscovered in Hong Kong. Similar experiences were encountered by many Berea members.

Sarah, widow of the founder and sister to Benjamin Chen, heads the women's work. She, too, is a member of the Berea Institute board. She maintains a health clinic and treats patients with herbs and other things found effective. She and the staff are firm believers in the efficacy of prayer for healing. One of the projects Sarah supervises is the making of very attractive Chinese dolls, pincushions, and knitting bags. Some of these have been sold in various churches in this country.

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# THIS TIME IT'S FOR KEEPS

When your Church votes on approving the Constitution or on joining the United Church of Christ, if it votes favorably on either ballot, this time it's for keeps.

Whichever way it may have voted in 1948 on the Basis of Union, that wasn't for keeps. Despite the belief of some people to the contrary, that vote was only advisory. Counsel and witnesses for the General Council have emphasized that. And no vote taken, either pro or con, during the years since, has had any binding effect.

But now it's different! The local Congregational Christian Churches in the United Church of Christ, if and when this Constitution is adopted, will be "those which vote to become a part of the United Church of Christ or which vote to approve this Constitution." (Art. IV, 13b.) And the instructions on voting sent with the ballots read, "When a church meeting has been properly called, please inform all members present that a vote of ratification or approval of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ also constitutes a vote to become a part of the United Church of Christ."

In other words, if your Church approves or ratifies this Constitution, it is *in* the United Church of Christ. There is no more "wait and see". It's for keeps!

### What Does It Mean?

And what does that mean? *It means that your Church can never again vote* on a merger with another denomination. It means that your Church can never vote on amendments to the Constitution, even if such amendments should be of a kind to change the much quoted par. 21 which claims to guarantee freedom. Remember that the provision in par. 22 that "actions, decision or advice" from the General Synod, conferences or associations, should be "advisory, not mandatory," found in the earlier drafts of the Constitution, has *already been amended out.*

Be not deceived! If you vote to become a part of the United Church of Christ, *you are in* a new kind of denomination, one which has forsaken the fundamental Congregational principle that the local Churches are superior to the national state or district bodies which they have created to serve them. You are in a denomination in which the lesser has declared itself to be superior to the greater.

And this vote is final. If next June the voting of the Churches is found to be such as to have put this Constitution into effect, if your Church has voted YES, you will be in it! Think carefully before you commit yourself to a surrender of these fundamental elements in historic Congregationalism!

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTITUTION

As indicated in an earlier communication directed to all Congregational ministers, an Analysis of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ has been prepared. The basic theme of this Analysis is the question of whether or not there are any fundamental changes from Congregational principles in the proposed Constitution. A printed Digest of this Analysis is available to anyone. They may be secured by writing to the national office of the National Association, 176 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin.

# WOMEN'S WORK

MRS. ROBERT E. COLLINS, Chairman
1014 FLORAL DRIVE, S.E., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

### *Fall Opens "New Year"*

Regardless of the fiscal year of Churchwomen's organizations, September invariably "feels like a new year" for the summer let-down gives way to an accelerated pace as groups resume their normal activities. It is a good time for the leaders — and "just plain members" — to take stock, to look critically at the *purpose* of their Church and women's organization, and to see if the latter truly serves the former. The "excuse for being" of a Churchwomen's group is that it serves its Church.

Does the purpose of your women's society, as set forth in your constitution, clearly mark yours as a Churchwomen's organization — and are you living up to it to the best of the combined ability of all your members?

### *New Issue of "Stimulating Suggestions"*

This summer the Publications Commision has cooperated with the Commission on Women's Work to print a revised handbook for the use of women's groups and individuals interested in promoting Congregational Christian Churchwork. Like its predecessor it is a resource book. As the Foreword suggests, "It is the intent that this handbook may shed light on many paths, not mark one path to follow."

Reading lists represent interests as broad as those of our truly Congregational Churches, which are "as individual as people."

Stress is placed on the maintenance of a balanced program, one which combines study and service projects with attention to spiritual and social concerns. It is the continuing feeling of Commission members — though they change from year to year — that local needs will be a prime consideration for any alert and zealous women's group.

The National Association office has just completed a mailing of a copy of the new issue of "Stimulating Suggestions, by and for Congregational Christian Churchwomen" to the Presidents of Women's organizations in all member Churches. Additional copies are available at $1 each, or with a 25% discount for orders of 25 or more. Address inquiries to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, 176 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin.

### *New Member Named to Commission*

It was with pleasure that the Commission on Women's Work learned recently that Mrs. James Greenwood of Cheyenne, Wyoming, had been appointed to the Commission. It is the policy of the Executive Committee to make appointments for a three-year term, which may be renewed. The Commission welcomes this appointment, representing a new section of the country.

### *Women's Seminar*

Several items of concern will be discussed by the women present at the seminar in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the National Association to be held in Maywood, Illinois, this month. It is hoped that they will bring questions, observations, and suggestions from their local organizations.

Choice will be made of the "Women's Project — Our Shared Benevolence" for the year 1961. It should be noted that all gifts made with that designation prior to December 31, 1960 will be credited to Piedmont College, the project chosen for this calendar year. Decision on this important subject will be made following a discussion of missionary projects believed suitable.

It is hoped also to discuss the suggestion of Mrs. John Alexander in a letter which appeared in the March 1960 Congregationalist. All women attending are invited to share their individual thinking as well as to bring the opinions of any group they may represent.

Commission members will present a brief but provocative playlet written by Mrs. Dorothy Schmitz of Allegan, Michigan.

### *Mother's Day Gift to Piedmont*

In keeping with the suggestion offered on our Women's Work page last March, an anonymous giver sent $100.00 to Piedmont College on Mother's Day. This gift is being used for the purchase of new books for the Sociology Department of the Library. Several groups of women have sent gifts of three, five, or ten dollars for Piedmont's library needs. President Walter writes "We are deeply grateful to all of our friends for these gifts toward our essential library services, and especially for the anonymous gift which was inspired by the thought of Mrs. John Alexander and all the ladies who adopted this plan of celebrating Mother's Day."

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## OUR COVER PICTURE

The World-Wide Communion Window of Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, which is shown on our cover this month, is a memorial to Mr. Arthur P. Stacy, a devoted member of Plymouth Church from 1887 until his death in 1946.

The theme of the window is in the affirmation at the top of the central panel, "Christians Hold the World Together." In that panel, Jesus holds in His right hand the communion chalice, and in the other the symbol of the triumph of the gospel over the world. The lower portion shows a communion table before which are gathered worshippers of various races, Eskimo, South Asiatic, American Indian, White, Negro, South Sea Islander, and Japanese.

The six medallions in the side lancets suggest the functions of the religious community which cut across all national barriers to unite mankind in common experiences: schools and churches, music, prayer, the Biblical press, social service, and participation in self-government. The window establishes for the chapel a universal note, "My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer."

# WORLD WIDE AND HEAVEN HIGH

**Henry David Gray, Ph.D., Hartford, Connecticut**

"There is one body and one Spirit—as you were called for the one hope that belongs to you all — one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over us all, who pervades us all, who is within us all." (*Moffatt*) *Ephesians 4:1-6.*

"Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (*Revised Standard Version*) *Ephesians 4:3.* (*Read I Corinthians 12:4-14; 27-28*).

Called from afar, the peoples of Christ come to Communion on the first Sunday in October. In stately edifices, wrought by craftsmen of long ago, they gather in city, town, and countryside throughout all Europe — even behind the "iron curtain." In brown basilicas and domed shrines, Christians of the most ancient Churches of the Middle East gather about the Lord's Table. In straw huts, in buildings with roofs curving upward at the edge, on ships at sea, yea, and some places under the wideness of the sky, men and women meet together this day to acknowledge "One God and Father of all, who is over us all, who pervades us all, who is within us all." Following the words written to the Church at Ephesus, we know ourselves to be part of the one indivisible and invisible Body of Christ, whose we are, and whom we seek to serve.

### Spiritual Unity

Like our forefathers, and like Christians in the years immediately following our Lord's death and resurrection, we are made one by our common allegiance to Christ.

In our day and age, there are some who misread the plain words of the Scripture which call us to be "one body" and ask us to have "one spirit." They seem to have closed their eyes to the meaning of Paul's oft-repeated figure of speech "body" — or "body of Christ" — used to stand for a spirit-controlled fellowship. They wish to rewrite the Bible to make "one body" mean the particular denomination or "ecumenical fellowship" to which they belong, whatever its name or sign. And those who thus mislead men seem to be quite ready to pass over the vibrant beauty of the simple gatherings which assembled in humble circumstances in homes to worship God, to commune with the Christ, to have fellowship one with another, and to go forth to serve others in the name and by the power of their Lord. Yet there is not now, and there never has been, any doubt as to the character of these little companies of people who carried on the Way of Jesus — at Antioch, at Jerusalem, at Ephesus, at Corinth, at Philippi, or at any other city mentioned in the New Testament, or in the Christian writings of the first century.

### What Made Them One Body

What happened in these gatherings can be described quite simply. Families came together in a large house to break bread, to sing, to hear the scriptures and letters read, to listen to expositions of the meaning of what was read, and to confer together about the ways in which they and others could become better followers of Christ, better citizens, better families, better persons.

What drew them together was a common conviction that the One called Jesus had showed them by word and by deed what God is like, and had given them strength to live lives after the wondrous pattern of His own. They felt themselves called together by a movement in them of the same Spirit of God which they had felt moving in Him. Because they shared the same spiritual experience, they were one body. What made them one was the recognition by each person that the spiritual flame kindled in others was the same holy light which had come into and had transformed his own life. The early Christian Church was a brotherhood of kindred spirits of men and women who knew themselves to be responsive to the will of God as made known to them in and through the life, teachings, death, and victory over death of the man they called "Lord" and "Master."

We look today for a fundamental rebirth of human life and society. We rightly seek the rebirth of conscience, the re-awakening of concern for others. The re-kindling of love for truth, and the re-establishment of kindly dealings between men, waits, *not* for one big organization, political, social, or religious; — it waits for spiritual experience deep enough and thorough enough to enable men to understand each other and to deal rightly with each other because they share one spirit.

There is no reason under heaven why all people should be compelled to accept and follow any one way of worship, in any one organized body, under the direction of any one leader or set of leaders. As wide as the world is the call to communion this day. The scripture says "Whosoever will may come," and come *not* because of membership in a particular denomination, but because of a love for God, a response to Him, and an honest desire to work with others in His service. *The call of communion is worldwide.*

### It Is Also Heaven High

It needs no form or ceremony to answer that call. God's love is as high as the heavens above; and God does not measure His giving of His love to you and to me by whether or not you and I follow the correct ritual, wear the right vestments, use a single silver chalice, take a tiny glass in our hands, or belong to any one special religious group. God's love is yours because it is the nature of the heart, the character of the Eternal Father. It is yours freely because God first loved you freely.

The early Church was simply an earthly counterpart — a forestate — of the glorious communion of kindred spirits in the Kingdom of God which is beyond all time. When the local community of Christ's followers prays and sings, it knows itself to be one with the choirs of angels who chant "Holy, Holy, Holy" in the presence of God Himself; one with all who have fought a good fight and have entered into their reward in their time. Yea, verily, the Church militant upon the earth forms with the Church triumphant in heaven one great communion which extends throughout the whole universe glorifying the eternal Father with one heart, one mind, and one voice because it shares one spiritual experience.

Men who answer the worldwide call come to the Table of the Lord to unite with the company of all those of all the years who have loved and served God, or who shall yet love and serve Him. The communion of the Lord is heaven high. It unites us *spiritually*, not only with all who seek to love and serve God on earth, but also with the great host of witnesses in heaven itself who have gone before. We proclaim a communion WORLD WIDE AND HEAVEN HIGH.

# AN ECUMENICAL BUSRIDE

**Mrs. George J. Mead, Hartford, Connecticut**

The bus stopped in front of one of the leading Congregational churches of our city, and two attractive looking women got on. They sat down just in front of me and started discussing the meeting they had just attended. The younger one, whom I shall call Mrs. A, remarked as she sat down, "My, that was a wonderful meeting. I wish Jim could have heard Dr. Hopkins speak. He just can't see this merger, but I think if he had heard that address, all his concerns would vanish. That really put it in a nutshell, didn't it, when he said 'Ecumenicity is the hope of the world'?" I pricked up my ears, for this was a subject close to my heart, and since it was not a private or personal matter they were discussing, I listened attentively.

"Well," remarked the older one, whom I shall call Mrs. B, "I had always thought that *Christ* was really the hope of the world, and besides, this proposed merger of the Congregational Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church seems to me to be the most *un*ecumenical thing I ever heard of."

### What Is Ecumenical?

"What do you mean 'unecumenical' — I thought that was the whole idea of merging," said Mrs. A.

"Maybe it is supposed to be," said Mrs. B, "but 'ecumenical' means *'universal,'* and there is certainly nothing universal about this union. It would take the whole, wide, open-armed concept of Congregationalism and pour it into the narrow confines of a constitution, *which is a governing document.* There has never been a constitution for Congregational Churches, only for the General Council. When you adopt an overall constitution, your free fellowship ends."

"But," said Mrs. A, "they say the United Church is to be Congregational."

"Yes I know they do, but then they also spell out in nearly 250 paragraphs all the ways it isn't," said Mrs. B.

"But look at paragraph 21 — that certainly lists our freedoms very carefully," Mrs. A argued.

"Yes, I know that paragraph is supposed to answer all our questions, and banish all our doubts, but — well — take this bit about our freedom to call our own minister, for instance. Then look in paragraph 30 on the next page where it says that the relationship of a minister to a church is a concern of the church at large — and in the By-Laws, — we don't vote on the By-Laws by the way — it speaks of not calling a minister of another denomination unless he has received the 'Privilege of Call' in the United Church of Christ, and that has to be signed by the President of the United Church. And in certain paragraphs of the By-Laws, ordination and installation are done through the association and conference, not through his local church. Think of that!" countered Mrs. B.

"Well," said Mrs. A, "it says in paragraph 21 that you don't have to go by those rules."

"So it does," said Mrs. B, "but don't you see how tough it would be both for minister and church if they went against the recognized procedure?"

"Maybe, but anyway we wouldn't have to worry about not owning and managing our property — it says plainly that we have autonomy in the management of our own affairs."

Mrs. B — "Yes, it does, but since when has a Congregational church been limited to the 'management of its own affairs'? Who was it that started Foreign Missions in the first place? Congregationalists not only established Foreign Missions but founded more seminaries and colleges and all sorts of educational and home mission kinds of institutions than other denominations, and they did it first. It was the creative spirit, born of feeling directly responsible to Christ, instead of an impersonal board, that inspired people to do all these grand things. The absence of authoritative bodies that had to be approached through channels made it possible to go ahead and get things done without getting all snarled up in bureaucratic red tape. In this union with the merged boards so much larger, the administration expense and overhead would go up proportionately, and therefore a smaller percentage of our missionary funds would get to the field.

"Then in the By-Laws, the absolute control of the clergy is spelled out in paragraph after paragraph. No longer could a student for the ministry select his own college or seminary — *and* it is the conference and association which is supposed to ordain and license and install him, *not the local church.* The certificate of ordination would have to be signed by the President of the United Church and the proper officer of the conference. There's nothing Congregational about that certainly!! The Synod is firmly in the control of the executive council — a body of 21 members, which is controlled by the administrative council, a body of 7 members, and the delegates in the hands of the conferences with their paid superintendents."

Mrs. A — "Well, I still think we should trust our leaders."

Mrs. B — "I would think so too, if they would put that paragraph 21 in an inalienable Bill of Rights, in spite of all it does not say. But they flatly refused to do so. The power to amend negates everything in that paragraph, and the second paragraph of the 'note' introducing the By-Laws really negates the freedoms that are supposed to be guaranteed, so that everything pertaining to our freedom is meaningless."

Mrs. A — "You do certainly make it all sound pretty authoritative, but what about Christ's prayer in John 17? Doesn't that give us a sort of directive? — You know, 'that they may all be one'?"

### The Meaning of Unity

Mrs. B — "Quoted out of context, it might sound that way, but it goes on to say, 'Even as *we* are one,' showing a spiritual unity with God, which of course all of us want. But remember, there was no organized Christian church in Christ's day, and the only times Christ really got angry were in connection with the Scribes and Pharisees — the influential leaders of the established church who were always harping on the *letter of the law* and losing the whole spirit. This whole union has been compared to marriage. Well, they should remember that in order to have a marriage really happy, there has to be real love and trust and integrity between husband and wife, and a fundamental congeniality. This is especially important in an inter-faith marriage. Now this union is like an inter-faith marriage, planned by the parents, and in a way forced on the parties concerned — and it is more tragic in a way than the marriage of two individuals, because it proposes to unite nearly two million people who are

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## AN ECUMENICAL BUSRIDE

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not fundamentally congenial, whose whole background and heritage are opposed. Already a tremendous amount of time, energy, and money, which could have been used to get the Lord's work done, has been wasted on this effort to bring into subjection churches whose founders gave their lives to set free. Are you really willing to toss away our glorious birthright for a mess of ecclesiastical pottage? Oh — here is my street. Think carefully. You and Jim have your lives before you. Think what it will mean to your children to grow up with a free faith — in a free church. Goodby for now."

I pondered this conversation deeply as the bus continued on its way. Please God more and more people will study this constitution and realize what it, or any constitution for Congregational churches, will mean to future growth of the Truly Ecumenical Spirit of Christ.

# AN OPEN LETTER TO DR. FRED HOSKINS

### FROM A YOUNG MINISTER

Dear Dr. Hoskins:

I have waited and thought this over, but I feel that a comment is necessary on the merger letter sent out by your office dated July 13, 1960. Sir, this is an extremely biased and unfair letter. This is particularly true in your first two summary observations. That the main question is, "Is it essentially consistent with the principles set forth in the *Basis of Union and Interpretations?"* I challenge. The main question is, "Is it essentially consistent with what our Churches believe and desire?"

But my basic objection has to do with words in observation "b": ". . . shall this Church continue in the main stream of the Congregational Christian Churches by approving the Constitution and becoming a part of the United Church of Christ?" This statement fails to recognize that there is some possibility that Churches merging may not be the main stream of Congregationalism. The statement is no doubt written to suggest to Churches, especially ones in which the merger and the Constitution have not been studied, that the right thing to do is to automatically approve the Constitution — "It's the thing to do!" And this is the unfair part.

Congregationalism, as I understand it, emphasizes reliance upon the consciences of individuals. Your letter seems to overlook that idea. If you were a committee for the presentation of merger propaganda that would be one thing, and I would go along with you that this is quite proper. However, your letter-head calls you the representative of the Congregational Christian Churches. Therefore, it would have been in order and Christian courtesy to acknowledge that a number of Churches disagree with you.

I do not intend to let this letter show whether I am for or against the merger. I am just trying to be fair. I ask only that this letter may register my disapproval of your letter.

Thank you,

(Rev.) Charles H. Hall

Machiasport, Maine
July 27, 1960

# OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

**Rev. Carl M. Gates, Claremont, California**

Theme for the Month: *Perspective*

*Suggested Readings: Psalm 115: 1-12 and Matthew 7:24-27*

"The greatest danger modern man faces," said a speaker at a recent church convention, "is the shortness of his view. This is the cause of his frustration and his unhappiness." The supreme values of life can be recognized only when life is seen in its proper perspective.

For example: it is the long view, into both past and future, which enables us to understand the real significance of our individual lives. Ralph Waldo Emerson even went so far as to say that "the supreme lesson of life is to learn what the centuries say to the hours." So long as we think simply of the present the temptation is strong to fancy that the comforts and achievements in which we delight are the result of our own doing. But any long look into history shows that we are heirs of countless ages, beneficiaries of untold multitudes whose labors and sufferings and sacrifices have made possible the richness of life which we so casually take for granted.

Moreover, to the man of faith the long look into the past reveals a Father God walking side by side with his earthly children as they climb slowly upward. It was the conviction of the Hebrews that the God of their fathers was guiding and caring for them which gave them courage to press on through all their difficulties toward the promised land; and our strength, too, in the midst of our anxieties, rests on the assurance that "the Lord hath been mindful of us, He will bless us."

So the long look into the past is supplemented by the long look into the future. A divine purpose is being worked out through the chaotic confusions and struggles which so often discourage us. Margaret Slattery used to tell the story of being one of a group who were entertained over night by a fire warden. Her window faced the east. When something woke her suddenly she saw a wide expanse of flaming red in the sky far along the horizon. In alarm she shouted to the warden: "Fire! fire in the east". With trained eyes he looked at the cause of the excitement and then replied, "That isn't a fire; it is the coming of dawn." The signs of our times are alarming to most of us, but if our faith were stronger we might recognize in what we thought to be imminent calamity the coming of a new and better day.

Again: it is when we see in their true perspective the drudgery and trouble which enter into every day's experience that we understand how often misfortunes prove to be blessings in disguise. Struggle develops strength; sorrow anoints the eyes to see the hidden anguish of other hearts; "stars shine brightest in the darkest night." The long look brings insight and courage and challenge into everyday living.

A Prayer for Courage: "God of all gallant hearts, save me today from pitying myself. Rebuild my strength and renew my courage. Inspire me by the example of those heroes of the faith who trusted Thee and found that of Thy mercy there is no end. Send me into the turmoil of life with a glad purpose and a singing heart. And grant that, even as Christ did, I may learn obedience through the things which I must suffer.

Amen." *(Rev. Rex S. Clements)*

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

# PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP

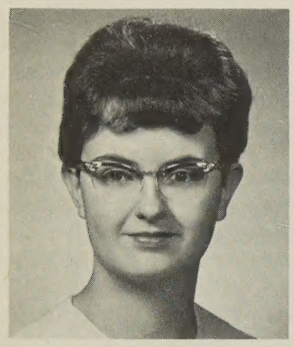
**Miss Marilyn Heaney, *Secretary***

**Box 1003, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont**

## Overseas 1960

***Helen L. Gray and Louisa Young***

Napoli, Torre Pellici and Agape, Milano, Firenze and Venezia are now more than strange sounding names from Italy for our overseas summer travellers. They stand respectively, for life in an orphanage, purpose in the Waldensian center, peace in a Russian refugee home, fellowship in an international youth camp, and experiences of great art and architecture. Add the Passion Play of Oberammergau, life on Swiss farms, the world's heart center at Geneva, the athletic center at Olympic Village in Rome, the joys and tribulations of group living and travel by ship, train, bus, tram, taxi and hike it — and you have a general index to our book of the summer 1960, (available with picture, we hope, in October.)



*Louisa Young*

Our chief purpose and goal was AGAPE — a magic word for over 10,000 young men and women from many countries who, since 1948 have helped to build, not only a fine group of buildings, designed by Leonardo Ricci of Florence, but also an example of fellowship and Christian understanding across cultural and national boundaries for those who would follow.

We nine shared in this heritage and came to know the founder and spiritual leader of this community of brotherly love, Dr. Tullio Vinay as a real friend. We hope you may meet him and Mrs. Vinay when they come to America in January.

"NEW MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH" was the theme of the first conference and we were challenged not to become Christian ghettos — living unto ourselves, or to shirk our responsibilities as people of God. "EUROPE 1960," as presented by Italian MPs, and ministers from East and West Germany, France and Switzerland is a complex series of problems, ideologies and relationships.

More meaningful than our tour of St. Peter's was our visit to a lofty cavern in the hills back of Torre Pellici. Here, with its three or four long narrow openings in the top and a pile of rocks for a pulpit, the Waldensians, during periods of persecution, have worshipped. And here we too raised our voices, albeit in several languages, in praise and thanksgiving for our common religious heritage, experiences and belief in "A Mighty Fortress is our God." The inspiration and spirit of this holy place gave us a feeling of unity in God. Impressive in its simplicity it contrasted greatly with the ornateness and elaborate glitter of the Roman churches.

*Casa Materna children with Janet Johnson and Diane Montgomery, Naples*

Photo Courtesy Fred M. Dole, Rocky Hill, Conn.

We were warned many times about the dangers of church-state affiliations and controls, and told that at least a fourth of the clerics would leave the Roman church if they could. Grateful for the opportunities we hope to be able to share with others some of the experiences and ideas which have made it memorable and worthwhile for all of us.

### Northeast P.F. Conference

A small but serious-minded group of the Northeast Pilgrim Fellowship held a conference at Camp Cowasset, North Falmouth, Massachusetts, during the week of August 29. Senior High young people from several of the northeastern states worshipped, studied, swam and sailed together under the leadership of competent advisors. Thanks to the courtesy and generosity of Miss Beatrice A. Hunt of Holbrook, Massachusetts, owner of the camp, this beautiful spot was made available for the second successive year for the training, inspiration and recreation of future leaders in our Continuing Congregational Churches.

## "ECHO OF FAITH" NOW IN ORBIT

About the same time that "Echo I", one of the most successful satellites yet put into orbit by man, made its first appearance in the skies, "The Echo of Faith," thrice-a-year publication of the National Association Pilgrim Fellowship, likewise went into circulation. If anyone thinks that the two have little in common, there is a resemblance in the purpose. "Echo I" is intended to bounce communications back and forth from one continent to another; "Echo of Faith" is to serve for the exchange of ideas between Pilgrim Fellowship groups in National Association and other free Congregational Christian Churches.

Published by the Northeast Pilgrim Fellowship for the use of youth groups in our Churches throughout the nation, this periodical contains "Program Pointers" for the coming months, accounts of activities of young people, suggestions for missionary and other special projects, and, last but not least, a number of excellent pictures of National Association P.F. officers, other leaders and workers, and of young people at work and at play.

A nominal charge of 25 cents a year has been set for subscriptions. News items, suggestions for improving the periodical, and subscriptions should be sent to "Editor, Echo of Faith," South Congregational Church, Main and Buckingham Streets, Hartford 3, Connecticut.

# FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Professor George V. Bohman**
**Royal Oak, Michigan**

With the submission of the final version of the Constitution of the United Church to Congregational voters, the die is clearly cast. Within comparatively few months, we shall know who wish to retain the full freedoms of independent Congregational Churches which cooperate in voluntary associations with their neighboring churches without controls or potential power of any such bodies over the Churches. We know that, whatever their numbers, there will be continuing Congregational Churches.

Now, we turn to the future, in which, I believe lies the opportunity for the resurgence of the Free Church, emergent from trial by fire and hurricane. One of our leaders has said that the most important task of the next decade is to found a thousand new Congregational Churches. If we believe it should be, we likewise believe we have the resources to make it so.

For more than a decade, the time, labor, and substance of Congregationalists has been spent fighting against the effort to abolish Congregationalism as we have known it and as we believe it ought to be. The fight has cost too much and all the cost is not yet paid in time or money. Those who desire a different form of Christianity have likewise spent with largesse, partly from our dollars, too, and with intensive efforts by leaders both within and outside official agencies. How many new Churches were not founded during this decade of the fifties because resources were used to promote the new denomination? What can we do in the sixties to make up for some of these losses?

Populations are shifting. New cities and suburbs lack Churches. More than this, thousands of families seek a convenant Church, without dogma, without a hierarchy above it, with every encouragement to intellectual and theological freedom, with an emphasis upon the growth of children with understanding and with personalities that can practice Christianity at its best.

One of life's greatest satisfactions can be participation in the beginning of a new free Church, either in person or by your gifts.

Let us be about the Master's business!

# FROM THE OLD COUNTRY

**Rev. A. D. Belden, D.D., London, England**

I am writing this contribution a long way from the Old Country — in fact in the charming home of Rev. Paul Pitman of Burlington, Iowa. It has been a privilege for me to meet several of the leading figures in the National Association during this first month of my tour, and I look forward with great interest to the Assembly at Maywood in October.

Naturally I have been interested in looking at this crisis in American Congregationalism at closer quarters. I have realized anew how intrinsically invincible the Congregational Principle of Freedom is. Should this merger go through there will still remain a continuing Congregational Denomination which can build itself into an even larger body of sound Churchmanship than the former Congregational Christian fellowship. Should the voting of the Churches on the United Church Constitution be as feeble as many expect it to be, then the way will be open for the Congregational Christian Churches to go forward into a new era of Church development based upon a better appreciation of the basic character of Congregationalism. In any case, Congregationalism will not die. It is too necessary to the ultimate unification of Christendom, not on a false basis of authoritarian ecclesiasticism and theological credal enforcement, but on the basic Christian doctrine of the Divine Love translated into a really free but ordered Christian Community expressing itself in varied forms of Church organization and styles of worship. Unity in Variety and Variety in Unity is God's method in Nature. It is also His method in the organization of a Varied but Love-United Christendom. That Love-United Christendom will lead the whole world of Religion into a spiral development of ever-increasing harmony of Action and of Thought. The true shape of the Universal Church of Christ — the Body of Christ — will lead all humanity in due time into that Brotherhood of Man which alone adequately fulfills the Fatherhood of God.

What a goal to which Congregationalists can lead their fellow Christians, Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican, Roman, Greek, and "what have you!"

# THE PROTESTANTS AREN'T COMING, FATHER!

**Rene J. Dawe, East Braintree, Massachusetts**

Organized Christianity, as differentiated from individual Christianity, appears to be, like capitalism, an institution characterized by the "boom" and "bust" cycle. Even a cursory examination of Christian history reveals this characteristic of the faith. Repeatedly, from Paul to Martin Luther and from Luther to our present era we see the Christian Church undergoing cyclic changes in its successes and failures; in its ability to capture the interest of the masses; in its frustration in the face of mass apathy; in its power to determine social direction; in its helplessness before secular materialism; and now, in the "boom" going on in the direction of physical organization of all Christian denominations and sects into one — commonly known as the ecumenical movement.

The current "boom" is predominantly Protestant. Here lies, apparently, the greatest need for organization and ecumenical realization. So, "In union there is strength" cry the ecumenists, confessing in their cry their ignorance of the great Christian principle of love which *alone* ties and binds and organizes. Sounding the fife and beating the drum in blind conformity to their self-image of good Christian soldiers, they march through the more than two hundred and fifty odd separate fields of Protestant faith attempting to conquer and subdue them to the idea of one big church for Jesus.

Unmindful of history, unaware of the lessons learned from the past, completely oblivious to all the inherent dangers of abused power, stultifying conformity, suppression of free conscience and inquiry, which are the ultimate rewards of ecumencity, the good soldiers, possessing little knowledge or feeling for the true message of Jesus, would have us abandon the great riches of our Protestant heritage for the pottage of pre-Reformation unity. And they campaign not alone.

### *The Call to "Return"*

Subtly allied with them, watching the progress of the Protestant ecumenical movement with interest and hope, encouraging it with comments on its truth and desirability and initiating an ecumenical endeavor of its own, stands the Roman Catholic Church. From the rarefied upper atmosphere of the papal regency come pontifical dicta stating the necessity for ecumenical merger and organization; and from the lower echelons, too, come writings such as those of one Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B.

Writing in the July issue of THE SIGN, *National Catholic Magazine*, Kilian McDonnell entitles his article "What Will Protestants Bring?" The theme of Father McDonnell's article is that the present ecumenical effort engaging Protestantism must eventually lead to a return of Protestants to the Catholic Church. To ignore the Catholic Church and be content with unification of all Protestant churches is not sufficient or satisfactory since "The true Christian can be no more satisfied with two churches than he can with two hundred: Christ founded only one," and "Implicit in the Christian Vocation is the call to work for the *return* of all to one fold and one Shepherd," (The italics supplied are mine, for the word *return* warrants special notice and thought. The implication is that we must return; there is no possibility for the establishment of a compromise church.) The body of the article lists some of the fears Protestants hold relative to any such return and comments on some of the great contributions Protestantism has made to Revelation — contributions, incidentally, which Protestants will bring with them when they return to the Church.

Now THE SIGN is a national Catholic magazine and it is one of the best. As such, it is an important publication. It serves to express official Catholic information and concepts and is also an important medium in the molding of Catholic opinion on a national level. Therefore, it would seem obligatory for Protestants to accord the strictest attention and thought to its contents especially as those contents refer to the current Protestant attempt at unity, and it would seem even more obligatory for followers of the Congregational way who find themselves caught up in this attempt through the proposed forming of the United Church of Christ. Let us then examine further the writing of Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B.

### *What Protestants Can Bring*

Father McDonnell asserts that "None of Christ's truth is to be found in Protestantism which is not found first in Catholicism . . . When and if Protestants return to the Church they will not bring with them truths which were formerly missing from Catholic doctrine. Their return will not add to the doctrinal content of the Church . . ." (but) "It is freely admitted that, in areas where Protestantism has preserved the religious truth she took from the Catholic Church at the Reformation, Protestantism has produced great sanctity and made great contributions to an understanding of Revelation." According to Father McDonnell, Protestants, when they return to the Church, will "come with a rich heritage of religious insights."

What does this statement mean for us who oppose not only a return to the Catholic Church but also, and more immediately, the establishment of one great authoritative Protestant church? The meaning is to be found in this proclamation that Protestants will "come with a rich heritage of religious insights." This is the crux of the whole and entire matter. This is the all important, essential and overriding difference between freedom and authoritative conformity. This is the great and significant difference between the will to do and to do the will. This, in short, IS Protestantism!

### *Insight Depends on Freedom*

The history of humanity (emphatically so in the natural sciences) makes manifest the fact that *only* under conditions which are conducive to and sympathetic with the spirit of free inquiry, skepticism, the dictates of liberated conscience, the challenging of constituted authority, and the imaginative dreams of men, can knowledge and *insight into that knowledge,* (without which knowledge is utterly useless), come to full fruition and have any effect on the affairs of man. Jesus Himself, who stands as the Supreme Challenger of the *status quo* and gives us for all time the model whereby authoritarianism, conformity and historical tradition are challenged by the grounded gauntlet, found it necessary to throw off the restricting fetters of the religious system in which He was nurtured and in which He matured.

The "rich heritage of religious insights" for which Father McDonnell so highly commends Protestantism has been achieved by just such challenge, difference of

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## THE PROTESTANTS AREN'T COMING

*Continued from Page 10*

opinion, courage, foresight, faith in the truth and belief that men want the truth and are ready to accept the truth when it is presented. The reduction of men to belief in doctrine, dogma, dicta, credos, canonical or constitutional law, mass conceived and implemented concepts of behavior is a denial of Jesus who is the eternal Individual.

Protestantism, and Congregationalism in particular, stands for something else. It stands for the belief that the Scriptures hold unrevealed truth yet to be found by insight, and only in freedom from all restricing influences will this truth be revealed, understood and applied to the progress of man. More insight will come, but it will come from thought — not blind adherence to the authoritative dictates of impersonal institutions, even though they may be Protestant ones.

This is why a few of us Protestants, Congregationalists by name, oppose merger and unification, Father McDonnell. We believe in the conditions that have given us a "rich heritage of religious insight" rather than conditions which would require us to conform to the dictates of an authoritative system of religion.

### *Protestantism the Difficult Way*

It is tremendously difficult to be a true Protestant, Father. We must individually find and understand truth. We have fellowship to help but we have no intercessors, no official revealers, no one to say "Go this way." Each of us is his own priest through faith in Jesus. But out of the difficulty, out of the struggle, out of the despair, out of the questioning, and in the aloneness, we get the insight that makes it all worthwhile and thus we close with God and become whole. This is the secret of our mysticism and holiness.

And finally, Father McDonnell, as Protestants and especially as Congregational Protestants, we believe that the ultimate solution to the great and difficult contemporary problems which challenge us lies nowhere but within this capacity of the individual to become self-integrated, whole or holy. We know that organization can offer us nothing save further complexity and separation from truth. We are repulsed and sickened by the term Organization Man and by everything the term connotes. For us, the current ecumenical "boom" is already a "bust."

So the Protestants will bring nothing to the Church on their joyfully anticipated return. For you see, Father McDonnell, the Protestants aren't coming, at least not the Congregationalists, not those worthy of the name, not those who *really* know Jesus and love God. Instead they invite you to join them, warmly and sincerely, and bear a hand in the production of a still richer heritage of religious insight for posterity. Won't you?

## MINNESOTANS ORGANIZE

A Committee entitled "Keep Minnesota Congregational" has been formed with headquarters at 1330 Washington Avenue, North, Minneapolis 11. A letter signed by Dr. Howard Conn has been sent to all the ministers in the state and to the Conference Superintendent and Directors. This group plans to produce one or more pamphlets calling attention to ways in which the proposed Constitution of the United Church of Christ destroys Congregationalism, and to provide speakers and material to every Church.

# FAMOUS CONGREGATIONALISTS

(With this issue we begin a series of brief biographical sketches of men and women who have enriched our heritage. No attempt will be made to keep the series chronological as Albert Peel did in *The Congregational Two Hundred 1530-1948*. When it has been possible to find portraits of the subjects these have been photographed and will be included. The author of the series is Arvel M. Steece, Ph.D., a Fellow of the Congregational Christian Historical Society. The photographer is John G. Towns. The cooperation of the Congregational Library, Boston, is much appreciated. Editor.)

## JOHN OWEN 1616-1683

John Owen was born at Stadham or Stadhampton (Oxfordshire) in 1616 and died at Ealing, Middlesex, England in 1683. He was educated at Oxford (B.A. 1632; M. A. 1635; D. D. 1653) and took Orders in the Church of England. Reacting against both Anglican and Presbyterian intolerance, he became an Independent.

***John Owen, D.D.***

During the Commonwealth he was friendly with Cromwell whom he accompanied to Ireland and Scotland. He became one of the preachers to the Council. Owen was Dean of Christ Church and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford. During his administration he restored discipline, improved teaching, preached frequently, and treated tolerantly those who differed from him.

He was out of favor toward the end of the Commonwealth and at the Restoration he settled in his native place where he refused both invitations to New England and conformity with preferment in old England. Later he gathered a distinguished congregation in London where he experienced both seasons of prosperity and persecution.

Throughout his career he found time to write many notable books which displayed his keen mind and wide learning. Since a complete list of his published works would be too long for a biographical sketch, the following representative titles are given: *The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ in Two Catechisms* (1645), *Eschol: or, Rules for Church Fellowship* (1647), The preface to the *Savoy Confession of Faith* (1658), *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (1668, 1674), *On Union among Protestants* (1680), *True Nature of a Gospel Church* (1689).

He was of a very irenic temper and sought ways to bring the Dissenters into closer cooperation. In view of this, it is the more surprising that he has been neglected in recent years. There is no standard modern biography. J. Moffat, *John Owen* (1911). A. Thomson, *Life of John Owen D.D.* (1853).

**Color Slides Available.** The Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches has 55 color slides, with accompanying comments, covering the Ralph F. Baldwins' visit to Hong Kong and the Berea Bible Institute and Assemblies. These slides are available. Inquire at the Missionary Society office, Room 2308, 100 North La Salle Street, Chicago 2, Illinois.

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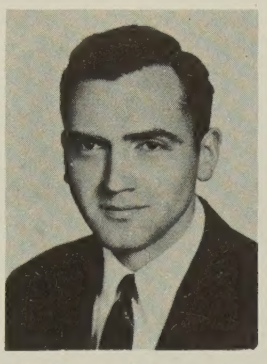
# WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE AND WORSHIP AS A CONGREGATIONALIST

**"The Congregational Way of Life"**
**by Arthur A. Rouner, Jr.**

**The Reverend Arthur A. Rouner Jr. traces the history of our Churches from England to America; examines their growth and changes; and shows what it is like to live and worship as a Congregationalist today.**



*Arthur A. Rouner, Jr.*

**One reader says "This book is a challenge to modern Congregationalists to make Congregationalism the Way of Church life that it was in the days of the fathers. It is indispensable to those who believe that the Way set forth in the Savoy Declaration of 1658 is and always will be valid for those who dare to follow it."**

**The prize winning entry in the Savoy Tercentenary contest sponsored by the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, 1958.**

**182 pp. 5⅜ x 8 inches $3.50**

**Published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J.**


## *SOUTH INDIA CONGREGATIONALISTS WIN LAWSUITS*

A letter dated August 11, 1960, from Rev. A. Zachariah of Nagercoil, South India, brings the good news that the London Mission Churches, which have been receiving substantial help from National Association Churches in America, have won the twelve lawsuits which have been pending in the District Court.

Mr. Zachariah says, "In all the suits the rights and titles to possession of the church, its buildings and premises, and its rights of worship have been declared in favor of the London Mission Christians, to the exclusion of the Church of South India Christians. The Church of South India and the agents commissioned or ordained by them are restrained by a permanent injunction from entering the London Mission churches to conduct the Church of South India worship or to officiate at any function. The Court costs in both Courts should be borne by the Church of South India people."

It is further stated that the Church of South India is making arrangements for appeal to the Madras High Court. The burden of the expense of defending against this appeal by the Congregationalists has been made very serious by the failure of the bank in which their funds have been kept. Mr. Zachariah, however, concludes his letter by saying, "God's ways and dealings with men are mysterious but He knows best and He knows all things."

# FROM THE LETTER BOX

*Editor,* THE CONGREGATIONALIST

An interesting change in the Constitution of the "United Church of Christ" is in the name of the agency that will be responsible for foreign missions. In the Basis of Union and the report of the Commission to prepare a Constitution the name of the agency was that of our historic American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Now, substituted for that, we have the United Church Board for World Ministries.

This change has been made quietly and, so far as I can discover, without protest. While we cannot accurately state motives for making such a change, there can be no doubt of one of its results. As a result of this change of name, there will be obliterated from the new denomination one of the most romantic aspects of our Congregational heritage. That the American Board has existed continuously since 1812, and that it is the oldest foreign mission board in America seems to have little influence in the thinking of the formers of this new denomination.

We may conclude from this change that there is little interest in the history of our fellowship among those who would change it, and that they are going to do all things possible to suppress the unique witness we have made to the world. Moving with the secular world, they are substituting centralization for freedom. They have to suppress the meaning of Congregationalism because they want to equate the secular institution of the church with the Christian religion.

(REV.) ANGUS MACDONALD

*Hutchinson, Kansas*

# *NEWS NOTES*

**Church Formed in Alaska.** Dr. Howell D. Davies reports that a Congregational Church was gathered in a private home in Anchorage, Alaska, on August 17. A full report on this, with an account of Dr. Davies' trip, will appear in an early issue of THE CONGREGATIONALIST.

**New Member Church.** The Beamsville Congregational Church, Greenville, Ohio, has voted to become a member of the National Association.

**Pastoral Change.** Rev. Lewis A. Chase, Wells, Maine, has accepted a call to the First Congregational Church, Scarborough, effective October 15.

### In Memoriam

It is with great regret that we report the death on September 5 of Mr. Walter Schmitter of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. He had served as Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Friends of the National Association, and was a member of the Commission on the Ministry. Memorial services were held on Sunday afternoon September 11. Our sympathy is expressed to Mrs. Schmitter.